

1 Stephen M. Doniger (SBN 179314)
stephen@donigerlawfirm.com
2 David Shein (SBN 230870)
david@donigerlawfirm.com
3 DONIGER / BURROUGHS
4 603 Rose Avenue
Venice California 9029
5 Telephone: (310) 590-1820

7 | Attorneys for Plaintiff

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

11 MICHAEL ARAM, INC., a New Jersey
12 Corporation,

13 | Plaintiff,

V.

16 SLT LENDING SPV, INC., d/b/a “Sur La
17 Table,” a Delaware Corporation; OM
18 Enterprises, an Indian Partnership; and
DOES 1 through 10,

19 | Defendants.

| Case No.:

PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

Jury Trial Demanded

1 Michael Aram, Inc., by and through its undersigned attorneys, hereby prays to
 2 this honorable Court for relief based on the following:

3 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- 4 1. This action arises under the Copyright Act of 1976, Title 17 U.S.C., § 101
et seq.
- 5 2. This Court has federal question jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and
 1338 (a).
- 6 3. Venue in this judicial district is proper under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(c) and
 1400(a) in that this is the judicial district in which a substantial part of the acts and
 10 omissions giving rise to the claims occurred.

11 **PARTIES**

12 4. Plaintiff MICHAEL ARAM, INC. (“ARAM” or “Plaintiff”), is a
 corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of New Jersey with a
 14 principal place of business located at 901 North Olive Ave, West Palm Beach.
 15 Florida 33401.

16 5. Defendant SLT LENDING SPV, INC., d/b/a “Sur La Table” (“SLT”) is
 a Delaware corporation that does business in and with the state of California, and
 18 Los Angeles, through its website and physical locations, including 138 Caruso
 19 Avenue, Glendale, CA 91210.

20 6. Defendant OM ENTERPRISES (“OME”) is an Indian partnership with
 its primary place of business in Uttar Pradesh, India. OME is an exporter and
 22 manufacturer operating in over 100 markets across the United Kingdom, South
 Africa, Middle Asia, and North America, including this District, through which it
 24 sells decorative and houseware items. OME partners with local retailers like SLT to
 25 bring its inventory directly to United States customers.

26 7. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants
 27 DOES 1 through 10, inclusive, are other parties not yet identified who have infringed
 28 Plaintiff’s copyrights, have contributed to the infringement of Plaintiff’s copyrights,

1 or have engaged in one or more of the wrongful practices alleged herein. The true
2 names, whether corporate, individual or otherwise, of Defendants 1 through 10,
3 inclusive, are presently unknown to Plaintiff, which therefore sues said Defendants
4 by such fictitious names, and will seek leave to amend this Complaint to show their
5 true names and capacities when same have been ascertained.

6 8. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that at all times
7 relevant hereto each of the Defendants was the agent, affiliate, officer, director,
8 manager, principal, alter-ego, and/or employee of the remaining Defendants and was
9 at all times acting within the scope of such agency, affiliation, alter-ego relationship
10 and/or employment; and actively participated in or subsequently ratified and/or
11 adopted each of the acts or conduct alleged, with full knowledge of all the facts and
12 circumstances, including, but not limited to, full knowledge of each violation of
13 Plaintiff's rights and the damages to Plaintiff proximately caused thereby.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

15 9. Michael Aram, owner of ARAM, is an award-winning artist who has
16 dedicated his career to craft-based design, including his unique and celebrated
17 sculptures, houseware, and jewelry.

18 10. Trained as a painter, sculptor, and art historian, Michael Aram's work
19 encompasses a wide range of media and reveals a rich and variant source of
20 inspiration – nature, mythology, narrative storytelling, and purified form.

21 11. After studying fine art and living as an artist in New York in the late
22 1980's, Michael Aram traveled to India where he discovered its rich metalworking
23 traditions. While there Michael Aram spent hours observing artisans as they made
24 items the same way as their families and predecessors had for centuries. Touched
25 by the talent of these gifted artisans and inspired to work with craftsmen whose
26 skills he felt were greatly untapped, Michael Aram set up a studio in India where
27 he has created his work for the past 30 years. Today, over 200 artisans work
28 alongside him in his workshop where the same creative interaction between artist

1 and artisan remains the source of every object that Michael Aram makes.

2 12. In drawing his inspiration for his designs, Michael Aram looks to his
3 surroundings and often makes sculptures of objects that might otherwise be
4 overlooked in the everyday. Nature is his biggest muse as can be seen in his
5 collections such as *Autumn Leaf*, *Bark & Branch*, *Black Iris*, *Black Orchid*, *Calla*
6 *Lilly*, *Cherry Blossom*, *Golden Ginko*, *Ivy & Oak*, *Ocean Reef*, *Olive Branch*,
7 *Palm*, *Pomegranate*, *Sunflower*, *Thorn*, *Twig*, etc. His work combines the
8 imperfections innate in the handmade process with the perfectly imperfect beauty
9 of nature to create objects that reflect humanity. Many of his pieces are ingrained
10 with a rich storyline, inherent symbolism, and deep-rooted meaning. Sometimes
11 his work is simply an exploration and celebration of the handmade process.
12 Bridging the gap between the artist and artisan is a hallmark of Michael Aram's
13 work. The handmade quality of the work allows it to shift between the realm of
14 fine and decorative art.

15 13. For more than thirty (30) years, ARAM has enjoyed substantial
16 success in the luxury market offering houseware designs created by Michael Aram
17 and owned in exclusivity by ARAM. This broad diversity embodies Michael
18 Aram's versatility as an artist who is comfortable working on private commissions,
19 one-of-a-kind pieces for gallery shows, or pieces that are affordable to a wider
20 audience.

21 14. ARAM's original works are featured in popular and influential
22 magazine and websites, including *Vanity Fair*, *Elle Decor*, *Portrait*, and *Home &*
23 *Design*. ARAM's products are sold in hundreds of points of distribution, including,
24 but not limited to, through ARAM's brick and mortar locations; its website,
25 <https://michaelaram.com/>; and, luxury stores Neiman Marcus, Bloomingdales,
26 Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Bergdorf Goodman.

27 15. SLT is a houseware store which sells its products through its website,
28 <https://www.surlatable.com/> and at its various physical locations across the United

1 States.

2 **CLAIMS RELATED TO THE SUBJECT DESIGN**

3 16. ARAM is the creator and owner of an original sculptural work of art,
4 entitled “Olive Branch Gold Menorah,” which was duly registered under registration
5 number VAu001414023 (“Subject Design”).

6 17. ARAM is informed and believes and thereon alleges that following its
7 distribution of Subject Design, SLT, OME, and DOE Defendants, and each of
8 them, purchased, distributed, advertised, and/or sold houseware goods featuring
9 designs which are substantially similar, if not virtually identical, to Subject Design
10 without ARAM’S authorization (“Offending Product”).

11 18. Offending Product includes but is not limited to the products sold by
12 SLT under the name “Sur La Table Hanukkah Gold Menorah” at
13 [https://www.surlatable.com/product/sur-la-table-hanukkah-gold-](https://www.surlatable.com/product/sur-la-table-hanukkah-gold-menorah/8724098)
14 menorah/8724098

15 19. Specifically, and without limitation, Offending Product is a mirror
16 image of a substantial portion of Subject Design. Exemplars of Subject Design
17 and Offending Product are below:

18 ///

19 ///

20 ///

21 ///

22 ///

23

24

25

26

27

28

1 **Subject Design**



10 **Offending Product**



20 **CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

21 (For Copyright Infringement – Against all Defendant, and Each)

22 20. ARAM repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates herein by reference as
23 though fully set forth, the allegations contained in the preceding paragraphs.

24 21. ARAM alleges that Defendants accessed the Subject Design by without
25 limitation, viewing, and/or purchasing the Subject Design.

26 22. ARAM alleges on information and belief that Defendants copied,
27 reproduced, displayed, and distributed the Offending Product to consumers.

23. ARAM alleges on information and belief that Defendants infringed Plaintiff's copyrights by creating infringing derivative works from the Subject Design and distributed same to the public.

24. Due to Defendants' acts of infringement, Plaintiff has suffered general and special damages in an amount to be established at trial.

25. Due to Defendants' acts of copyright infringement as alleged herein, Defendants, and each of them, have obtained direct and indirect profits they would not otherwise have realized but for their infringement of Plaintiff's rights in the Subject Design. As such, Plaintiff is entitled to disgorgement of Defendants' profits directly and indirectly attributable to Defendants' infringement of Plaintiff's rights in the Subject Design in an amount to be established at trial. Plaintiff further alleges that Defendants have committed copyright infringement with actual knowledge or reckless disregard of ARAM's rights such that said acts of copyright infringement were, and continue to be, willful, intentional and malicious.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Wherefore, Plaintiff prays for judgment as follows:

- a. That Defendants and their respective agents and servants be enjoined from importing, manufacturing, distributing, offering for sale, selling or otherwise trafficking in any product that infringes Plaintiff's copyrights in the Subject Design;
 - b. That Plaintiff be awarded all profits of Defendants plus all losses of Plaintiff, the exact sum to be proven at the time of trial, or, if elected before final judgment, statutory damages as available under the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*;
 - c. That Plaintiff be awarded its attorneys' fees as available under the Copyright Act U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*;
 - d. That Plaintiff be awarded pre-judgment interest as allowed by law;
 - e. That Plaintiff be awarded the costs of this action; and

1 f. That Plaintiff be awarded such further legal and equitable relief as the
2 Court deems proper.

3 **JURY DEMAND**

4 Plaintiff demands a jury trial on all issues so triable pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P.
5 38 and the 7th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

6
7 Dated: April 16, 2025

DONIGER/BURROUGHS

8 By: /s/ Stephen M. Doniger
9 Stephen M. Doniger, Esq.
10 David Shein, Esq.
11 Attorneys for Plaintiff

12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28